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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/887,475	06/25/2001	Yaakov Navon	NAVON=4	7566

1444 7590 06/17/2004

BROWDY AND NEIMARK, P.L.L.C.
624 NINTH STREET, NW
SUITE 300
WASHINGTON, DC 20001-5303

EXAMINER

HUNG, YUBIN

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2625

DATE MAILED: 06/17/2004

3

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/887,475

Applicant(s)

NAVON, YAAKOV

Examiner

Yubin Hung

Art Unit

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-42 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-42 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 25 June 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☒ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 2. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Information Disclosure Statement

1. Examiner's Comment: The cover letter for the Information Disclosure Statement (Form 1449A/PTO) has not been signed. Please submit a signed cover letter for the IDS filed October 2, 2001 (paper #2).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1, 2, 7, 10, 12, 15, 16, 21, 24, 26, 29, 30, 35, 38, 40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chakraborty et al. (US 5,995,695) and Ibison et al. (US 5,506,913).

5. Regarding claim 1, and similarly claims 15 and 29, Chakraborty et al. discloses

- smearing the image
[Fig. 2, numeral 200; Col. 4, lines 46-49]
- identifying a region of the image that contains the group of the line segments as a possible location of the symbols
[Fig. 1, numeral 12; Fig. 2, numerals 300, 350; Col. 3, lines 44-48; Col. 5, lines 54-57]

Chakraborty et al. does not expressly disclose/suggest the following, which Ibison et al. teaches

- fitting line segments through edge points of features in the smeared image
[Col. 2, lines 30-31. Note that line fitting is done by Hough transform. While Hough transform is not considered by Ibison et al. as the best for their purpose, Chakraborty et al. in Col. 4, lines 26-27 uses it to detect lines.]
- finding a group of the line segments in mutual proximity that are mutually substantially parallel
[Fig. 3; Col. 5, lines 33-44; Col. 13, lines 44-64]

Chakraborty et al. and Ibison et al. are combinable because they are from the same field of endeavor of image processing.

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Chakraborty et al. with the teaching of Ibison et al. by fitting lines on edge points and grouping lines that are nearly parallel and close to each other. The motivation would have been to take advantage of the fact that in a document text lines

usually are in clusters therefore the presence of a group of nearly parallel lines that are equally spaced (or nearly so) is a very good indication of a text block.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Ibison et al. with Chakraborty et al. to obtain the invention of claim 1.

6. Regarding claim 2, and similarly claims 16 and 30, Chakraborty et al. further discloses/suggests

- binarizing the image before smearing it
[Fig. 2, numeral 100]

7. Regarding claim 7, and similarly claims 21 and 35, Ibison et al. discloses/suggests

- fitting the line segments comprises applying a Hough transform to the edge points
[Col. 2, lines 30-31. Note that line fitting is done by Hough transform. While Hough transform is not considered by Ibison et al. as the best for their purpose, Chakraborty et al. in Col. 4, lines 26-27 uses it to detect lines.]

8. Regarding claim 10, and similarly claims 24 and 38, Ibison et al. further discloses/suggests

- finding the group of the line segments comprises finding end points of the line segments, and selecting the line segments for inclusion in the group whose end points are within a predetermined range of one another
[Fig. 7(c); Col. 13, lines 58-60. Note that the identification of the endpoints is inherent]

9. Regarding claim 12, and similarly claim 26, Chakraborty et al. and Ibison et al. further disclose/suggest

- capturing an image of the object
[Ibison et al.: Fig. 12 ; Col. 17, line 58 - Col. 18, line 7. Note also that Col. 3, lines 61-62 of Chakraborty et al. also imply that the input image has been captured beforehand]
- applying optical character recognition to read the characters in the region
[Chakraborty et al.: Fig. 1, numeral 14; Fig. 6, numeral 402; Col. 3, lines 50-54]

10. Regarding claim 40, Chakraborty et al. and Ibison et al. disclose/suggest everything [per the analysis for claim 1 (and similarly claim 29) above], which Chakraborty et al. further discloses/suggests

- the symbols comprise characters, and wherein the instructions cause the computer to apply optical character recognition to read the characters in the identified region
[Fig. 1, numeral 14; Fig. 6, numeral 402; Col. 3, lines 50-54]

11. Claims 3, 17, 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chakraborty et al. (US 5,995,695) and Ibison et al. (US 5,506,913) as applied to claims 1, 2, 7, 10, 12, 15, 16, 21, 24, 26, 29, 30, 35, 38, 40 above, further in view of Tamaoki (JP 10-224626, also with English translation).

12. Regarding claim 3, and similarly claims 17 and 31, Chakraborty et al. and Ibison et al. disclose/suggest everything except the following, which Tamaoki teaches

- binarizing the image comprises applying selective binarization so as to preserve in the binarized image the features of the image that have stroke widths in a predetermined range that is associated with the symbols
[Lines 1-8 of the English translation of the abstract]

Chakraborty et al., Ibison et al. and Tamaoki are combinable because they are from the same field of endeavor of image processing.

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Chakraborty et al. and Ibison et al. with the teaching of Tamaoki by applying a binarization approach that will obtain appropriate line width (i.e., the resultant stroke widths are in a predetermined range). The motivation would have been to preserve the integrity of the symbols (e.g., by not causing broken strokes) so as to improve the accuracy of any subsequent OCR operations.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Tamaoki with Chakraborty et al. and Ibison et al. to obtain the invention of claim 3.

13. Claims 4-5, 18-19, 32-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chakraborty et al. (US 5,995,695) and Ibison et al. (US 5,506,913) as applied to claims 1, 2, 7, 10, 12, 15, 16, 21, 24, 26, 29, 30, 35, 38, 40 above, further in view of Chiba et al. (JP 08-272965, also with English translation).

14. Regarding claim 4, and similarly claims 18 and 32, Chakraborty et al. and Ibison et al. disclose/suggest everything except the following, which Chiba teaches

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- smearing the image comprises applying a morphological expansion operator to the features in the image
[Lines 9-14 of the English translation of the abstract]

Chakraborty et al., Ibison et al. and Chiba et al. are combinable because they are from the same field of endeavor of image processing.

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Chakraborty et al. and Ibison et al. with the teaching of Chiba et al. by applying morphological expansion for smearing. The motivation would have been for its simplicity and the ease of its implementation on a parallel processor.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Chiba et al. with Chakraborty et al. and Ibison et al. to obtain the invention of claim 4.

15. Regarding claim 5, and similarly claims 19 and 33, Chiba et al. further teaches

- applying the expansion operator comprises expanding the features in a plurality of different directions, and selecting one of the directions so as to minimize a number of runs of consecutive pixels in the smeared image
[Lines 6-14 of the English translation of the abstract. Note that for each edge pixels (i.e., 'feature') the selected direction is the direction perpendicular to the edge direction (i.e., the gradient direction). This will minimize the number of runs because the expansion direction is along character strokes (see Fig. 5).]

16. Claims 6, 20, 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chakraborty et al. (US 5,995,695), Ibison et al. (US 5,506,913), and Chiba et al. (JP 08-272965 with English translation) as applied to claims 4-5, 18-19, 32-33 above, further in view of Yamazaki (US 6,633,409).

17. Regarding claim 6, and similarly claims 20 and 34, Chakraborty et al., Ibison et al. and Chiba et al. disclose/suggest everything except the following, which Yamazaki teaches

- fitting the line segments through the edge points comprises fitting the segments through end points of the runs
[Col. 13, lines 22-26]

Chakraborty et al., Ibison et al., Chiba et al. and Yamazaki are combinable because they are from the same field of endeavor of image processing.

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Chakraborty et al., Ibison et al. and Chiba et al. with the teaching of Yamazaki by linearly fitting endpoints of line segments (i.e., runs). The motivation would have been to reduce the number of points used for line fitting (and thus reduces computation time) while maintaining the accuracy of the fit (since a run is completely determined by its endpoints).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Yamazaki with Chakraborty et al., Ibison et al. and Chiba et al. to obtain the invention of claim 6.

18. Claims 8, 22, 36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chakraborty et al. (US 5,995,695) and Ibison et al. (US 5,506,913) as applied to claims 1, 2, 7, 10, 12, 15, 16, 21, 24, 26, 29, 30, 35, 38, 40 above, further in view of Pasco et al. (US 6,064,778).

19. Regarding claim 8, and similarly claims 22 and 36, Chakraborty et al. and Ibison et al. disclose/suggest everything except the following, which Pasco et al. teaches

- fitting the line segments comprises determining skew angles of the rows of symbols based on orientations of the line segments
[Fig. 3b, numerals 56, 62, 66; Col. 8, lines 41-47; Col. 9, lines 38-41, 49-50]

Chakraborty et al., Ibison et al. and Pasco et al. are combinable because they are from the same field of endeavor of image processing.

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Chakraborty et al. and Ibison et al. with the teaching of Pasco et al. by determining skew angles of the rows of symbols based on orientations of the line segments. The motivation would have been to be able to automatically detect the skew

of a document so that compensation can be made in order to improve compression efficiency. [Pasco et al.: Col. 1, lines 33-43.]

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Pasco et al. with Chakraborty et al. and Ibison et al. to obtain the invention of claim 8.

20. Claims 9, 23, 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chakraborty et al. (US 5,995,695) and Ibison et al. (US 5,506,913) as applied to claims 1, 2, 7, 10, 12, 15, 16, 21, 24, 26, 29, 30, 35, 38, 40 above, further in view of Snyder et al. (US 6,195,474).

21. Regarding claim 9, and similarly claims 23 and 37, Chakraborty et al. and Ibison et al. disclose/suggest everything except the following, which Snyder et al. teaches

- finding the group of the line segments comprises selecting the line segments for inclusion in the group based on numbers of the edge points that are located on each of the selected line segments
[Col. 6, line 67 - Col. 7, line 4. Note that the selection of the lines is based on the number of edge pixels]

Chakraborty et al., Ibison et al. and Snyder et al. are combinable because they are from the same field of endeavor of image processing.

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Chakraborty et al. and Ibison et al. with the teaching of Snyder et al. by selecting lines basing on the edge point number criteria. The motivation would have been to be pick the best fitted line (via Hough transform) since the number of included edge points is an obvious indication of line fitting accuracy.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Snyder et al. with Chakraborty et al. and Ibison et al. to obtain the invention of claim 9.

22. Claims 11, 25, 39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chakraborty et al. (US 5,995,695) and Ibison et al. (US 5,506,913) as applied to claims 1, 2, 7, 10, 12, 15, 16, 21, 24, 26, 29, 30, 35, 38, 40 above, further in view of Messelodi et al. ("Automatic Identification and Skew estimation of Text Lines in Real Scene Images," *Pattern Recognition* 32 (1999), pp. 791-810).

23. Regarding claim 11, and similarly claims 25 and 39, Chakraborty et al. and Ibison et al. disclose/suggest everything except the following, which Messelodi et al. teaches

- identifying the region comprises selecting a plurality of regions containing respective groups of the line segments at different skew angles
[Fig. 10; P. 804, left column, 2nd paragraph, lines 7-10]

Chakraborty et al., Ibison et al. and Messelodi et al. are combinable because they are from the same field of endeavor of image processing.

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Chakraborty et al. and Ibison et al. with the teaching of Messelodi et al. by selecting regions containing respective groups of the line segments at different skew angles. The motivation would have been to be able to automatically segment text blocks that have different orientations (as often occur on book covers) so that they can be de-skewed to improve the performance of subsequent OCR operations.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Messelodi et al. with Chakraborty et al. and Ibison et al. to obtain the invention of claim 11.

24. Claims 13-14, 27-28, 41-42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chakraborty et al. (US 5,995,695) and Ibison et al. (US 5,506,913) as applied to claims 1, 2, 7, 10, 12, 15, 16, 21, 24, 26, 29, 30, 35, 38, 40 above, further in view of Moed et al. (US 5,770,841).

25. Regarding claim 13, and similarly claims 27 and 41, Chakraborty et al. and Ibison et al. disclose/suggest everything except the following, which Moed et al. teaches

- the object comprises a parcel

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[Fig. 1, numerals 20a, 20b, 20c; Col. 5, lines 10-13]

- the one or more rows of the characters comprise address information for the parcel

[Fig. 2, numeral 38-40; Col. 5, lines 38-43]

Chakraborty et al., Ibison et al. and Moed et al. are combinable because they are from the same field of endeavor of image processing.

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Chakraborty et al. and Ibison et al. with the teaching of Moed et al. by applying their line fitting, grouping, and OCR to address blocks on parcels. The motivation would have been to automate address interpretation in mail processing in order to improve throughput and to reduce labor cost.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Moed et al. with Chakraborty et al. and Ibison et al. to obtain the invention of claim 13.

26. Regarding claim 14, and similarly claims 28 and 42, Moed et al. further teaches

- sorting the parcel responsive to the address information

[Abstract: lines 14-17]

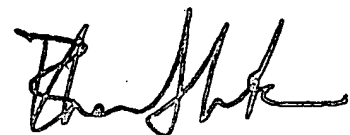
Contact Information

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Yubin Hung whose telephone number is (703) 305-1896. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:30 - 4:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Bhavesh Mehta can be reached on (703) 308-5246. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Yubin Hung
Patent Examiner
June 3, 2004



BHAVESH M. MEHTA
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2800